

Devoted to the interests of the FREEDMEN OF THE SOUTH and the establishment and maintenance of EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL MEN, regardless of class or color.

THE FREEDMEN'S CONVENTION. OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS.

FIRST DAY'S MORNING SESSION.
RALEIGH, Sept. 29, 1865,
Methodist African Church,
Ten o'clock, A. M.

In accordance with the wishes of the colored people of the State of North Carolina, as expressed in mass meetings and through the press, a large number of colored men, duly designated as delegates from a number of the counties of the State, assembled in convention in pursuance of the published call, and were called to order by Mr. A. H. Galloway, who nominated Mr. John Good, of Newbern, as chairman pro tem. Mr. Good was elected.

Mr. J. Randolph, Jr., of Craven, was chosen as Secretary, pro tem.

Mr. J. H. Harris, of Wake, moved that a committee of five be appointed on credentials, which motion was adopted and the committee appointed as follows:—A. Bass, E. A. Richardson, Amos York, J. H. Harris and J. Schenck.

On motion of Chaplain Rue the chairman was authorized to examine the credentials of the committee.

Mr. E. H. Hill moved that a committee of seven be appointed to draw up rules for the government of the convention. A debate occurred as to the propriety of this motion, the convention not being organized; but the motion prevailed, and the committee was appointed as follows: E. H. Hill, G. A. Rue, J. Boeman, Hull Grimes, J. P. Sampson, Jas. Green and Jas. Jones.

Mr. Galloway moved that delegates who were not able to obtain credentials from their constituents, on account of the interference of the whites in some counties, be admitted. Prevalled.

The committee on credentials reported. Report received and adopted. Mr. G. W. Price of Craven was appointed Assistant Secretary, pro tem.

Mr. Hood, in order to expedite business, moved that a committee of six be appointed on permanent organization. Motion amended by increasing the number to nine, and the following gentlemen were appointed:—Messrs. Hood, Bell, Crook, Gible, Roberts, W. J. Williams, Gibson and Canham.

The convention then adjourned until two o'clock.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Sept. 29th, Two o'clock, P. M.
Pursuant to adjournment the convention met at two o'clock, and were called to order, Chairman pro tem. presiding.

Committee on rules for the government of the convention, offered their report.—Mr. Galloway objected to its acceptance until the permanent organization had been effected. Objection overruled and the report received. The report was as follows:

Your committee on rules for the government of the convention, met with the Rev. E. H. Hill in the chair. On motion, J. P. Sampson was appointed Secretary. The following rules were adopted and are presented for your consideration:—

I.—There shall be two regular daily sessions of the convention. The morning session shall commence at 9:30 o'clock, and adjourn at 12:30 o'clock. The afternoon session shall convene at 2 o'clock, and adjourn at 5 o'clock.

II.—One third of the members of the convention shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

III.—No member shall leave the convention without permission of the President, and no member shall be recognized or his motion received as before the convention, unless the speaker is within the bar of the convention.

IV.—No member shall be allowed to speak more than twice upon the same question, unless by special consent of the convention; and not longer than ten minutes the first time and five minutes the second time.

V.—Relying on God for the rectitude of our intentions to secure equal rights, therefore, each session shall be opened with religious devotion by the chaplain.

VI.—Should any member or members of the convention be found intoxicated during the setting of the convention, he or they shall be excluded from its sessions.

VII.—Marshall-Mannual shall govern the proceedings of the convention, in all cases wherein provisions are not herein stated.

On motion the report was adopted.

Mr. J. H. Harris of Wake, presented the following resolution, which was adopted:—

Resolved.—That this be considered a mass convention, and that all delegates from town and county mass meetings be entitled to seats in the convention, without regard to the legislative representation of the different counties.

The committee on permanent organization reported the following nominations for permanent officers of the convention: President.—Rev. J. W. Hood—Vice President, J. P. Sampson.—Secretary, J. Randolph, Jr.—Assistant Secretary, Wm. Cawthorn.—Treasurer, J. R. Caswell.—Chaplain, O. Bass.

On motion the report was amended by substituting the name of J. T. Schenck for that of J. P. Sampson, as Vice President, and as amended the report was adopted.

On motion, the number of Vice Presidents was increased to seven, and the following were elected in accordance therewith:—J. H. Harris, J. P. Sampson, Isham Sweat, Wm. Smith, Stewart Ellison, Serg't. Thos. Littleton.

A committee of two was appointed to conduct the President to the chair. On taking his seat the President addressed the convention as follows:—

Gentlemen of the Convention.—I hardly know how to express my thanks for the high honor you have conferred upon me; an honor I could scarcely have dreamed of enjoying, for I consider that there has never been and never will be a more important assembly than this now convened here. We have met here to deliberate on the best interests of our people. We come from the hills, from the mountains and from the deserts. We come together as one man, and our watchword is "equal rights before the law." We have come together, I presume, with the understanding that it is necessary that we should act, in-floors and out of doors, respectfully to all men, whether they be gentlemen or whether they be ruffians. There is one thing, in our deliberations which I hope will be guarded against, and that is, harsh language towards any person. I myself am an adopted citizen of the State, having lived here for some two years, and if I am not a citizen here, I am not a citizen of any State. I say that we and the white people have to live here together. Some people talk of emigration for the black race, some of expatriation, and some of colonization. I regard this as all nonsense. We have been living together for a hundred years or more, and we have got to live together still; and the best way is to harmonize our feelings as much as possible, and to treat all men respectfully.

Respectability will always gain respect; not from ruffians, it is true, but from gentlemen, and I am convinced that the major part of the people of North Carolina are gentlemen and ladies. I do not mean one class alone, but the major part of the people, both white and black. That being the case, I believe if we respect ourselves, we shall be respected.—We may not gain all we want at once, it is true; although I think we ought for we have waited long enough for our rights. People used to say it was not the time to abolish slavery, and used to tell us to wait until the proper time arrived; but it would only seem reasonable that the more slaves there were, the more difficult it would be to set them free. The best way is, to give the colored men rights at once, and then they will practice them and the sooner know how to use them.

There are three things we want, which we have not got before the civil courts, or under the civil law. First, the right to testify in courts of justice, in order that we may defend our property and our rights. Secondly, representation in the jury box. It is the right of every man accused of any offence, to be tried by a jury of his peers. I claim that the black man is my peer, and so I am not tried by my peers, unless there be one or more black men in the jury box. I believe also that black men should be allowed to act as counsel in all courts of law.—Thirdly, and finally, the black man should have the right to carry his ballot to the ballot box. These are the rights that we want—that we will contend for—and that by the help of God we will have, God being our defender. (Loud applause.)

On motion Mr. Lee Jasper was appointed First Marshal and Mr. J. H. Jones, Second Marshal, and instructed to seat delegates and visitors and preserve order.

On motion, a committee of three was appointed to invite Gov. Holden, Gen. Ruger, Commandant of the Department, Col. Whittlesey and Col. Clapp of the Freedmen's Bureau to be present at the session of the convention, and extend to them its privileges and favor it with an address. Messrs. Galloway, Gible and Littleton were appointed.

On motion a business committee of seven was appointed, consisting Messrs. Sampson, Harris, Patcher, Nixon, W. H. Smith, Serg't. Farber and Sweat.

On motion the convention adjourned until evening.

EVENING SESSION.

Convention met at seven o'clock. President in the chair. He announced that the session was not intended for the transaction of business, but to listen to addresses from members.

Mr. Isham Sweat, of Cumberland, Mr. J. H. Harris, of Wake, and Mr. A. H. Galloway of Craven, made speeches advocating equal rights, and a moderate conservative course in demanding them.—The speeches, while in the main consisting of framed arguments, were interspersed with good hits and genuine wit, and were well received.

Convention adjourned until morning.

SECOND DAY—MORNING SESSION.

Saturday, Sept. 30th, 1865.

Convention assembled pursuant to adjournment. President in the chair. Prayer by Chaplain Bass, followed by the singing of the hymn entitled, "Blow ye the trumpet, blow."

Roll of delegates called—109 present.

Minutes of yesterday's proceedings were read, and after slight correction, adopted.

Mr. J. H. Harris moved that a committee of three on finance be appointed. Adopted. Messrs. Bell, Price and Roberts were appointed. The business committee, through their chairman, reported a series of resolutions which were received and adopted as follows:—

Resolved. That we, the Freedmen's Mass Convention, in assembly, met in the city of Raleigh, on the 29th day of September, A. D., 1865, do congratulate one another and the friends of equal rights throughout the State and country, upon the assembling of so large a number of delegates from all parts of the State, representing the feelings, sentiments and desires of our race, on the all important subject of equal political rights before the law.

Resolved. That a committee of three be appointed to prepare an address to the constitutional convention of the State of North Carolina, which is to assemble in Raleigh on the second of Oct., representing the wishes of this convention on the subject of Equal Rights, and that their services be rendered immediately after the adjournment of this convention.

Resolved. That we recommend the Freedmen of North Carolina to educate themselves and their children.

Resolved. That we are in favor of our government and the Union against all enemies, at home or abroad; that our fathers fought to establish and we will fight to maintain them; that we will not hesitate in the prompt performance of our duty to the nation in any hour of peril, and will prove by habits of industry and respectability that we are worthy of citizenship among the people of North Carolina.

Resolved. That we hail the event of emancipation, with the Freedmen's Bureau governing the interests of the colored men in the South; the recognition of the independence of Hayti and the Republic of Liberia by our government; the admission of Mr. Rock, a colored lawyer, to the bar of the Supreme court; the establishment of schools for more than seventy five thousand freed children in the South; the amendment to the Federal Constitution and its endorsement by various State Legislatures and Conventions; the progress of enlightened sentiment and moral obligation, and republican liberty everywhere, with joy and thanksgiving, as turning a bright page in the history of progressive civilization, a triumph of the principles, a practical assertion of the fundamental truths laid down in the great charter of Republican liberty, the Declaration of Independence.

Resolved. That we hail with satisfaction the efforts of that portion of the Republican party of which Messrs. Chase, Sumner, Stevens and Greeley are the head, to secure to the colored citizen his rights through the action of Congress.

Resolved. That we hail to-day's issue of the JOURNAL OF FREEDOM, advocating the interests of the Freedmen of the State and the whole South, published in this city by Messrs. Brooks & Crane, with joy. We value its able editorials and will give it our unqualified support.

Resolved. That we view with pride the rapid progress being made on the part of our young men in the glorious cause of education, in pursuing useful and honorable vocations; and we return our thanks to Messrs. Sampson, Hamilton and other publishers of newspapers devoted to equal political rights to all men.

On motion, the committee to prepare an address to the Constitutional Convention was enlarged to five. Messrs. J. H. Harris, J. Randolph, G. A. Rue, Isham Sweat and J. R. Good were appointed.

On motion, the committee on Finance was increased to five to include the Treasurer of the Convention and the Rev. E. H. Hill.

On motion, the Convention adjourned until 2 o'clock.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Convention met pursuant to adjournment. President in the chair. Prayer by the Chaplain.

The Committee on Invitations reported through their Chairman that they had obeyed their instructions, Governor Holden had excused himself from accepting on the grounds of ill health and pressing business. General Ruger explained that it would be impossible for him to attend from the fact that he had just returned after an absence of ten days from his headquarters, and that he therefore was behind-hand in his business; Col. Whittlesey was present, having accepted the invitation; Col. Clapp was out of town.

Col. Whittlesey was invited to address the meeting, but not wishing to interfere with the accomplishment of business, he declined, and designated Monday evening at early candle light as the proper time. It was agreed by the Convention that they would listen to him with pleasure at that time.

A letter from Wm. W. Coleman, Esq., of Cabarrus county, was presented by a delegate. Mr. J. R. Good moved that the letter be received and read. He stated that he knew Mr. C. to be a gentleman and a statesman, a member of the North Carolina Legislature in 1855, and now County Solicitor of Cabarrus, and a true friend to the negro. The letter was received and read as follows:

CONCORD, N. C., Sept. 27, 1864.

To the Secretary of the Freedmen's Convention:

The delegate from Cabarrus (the bearer) has presented me with a circular advocating the claims of the freedmen to equal rights before the law. I concluded that the best way of acknowledging the receipt of the same and of expressing my sympathy with the objects of your Convention would be to address you a short letter setting out in brief my views upon the question with my reasons therefor.

In the first place you should be allowed to vote as a matter of right.

There was only one State refused you this right in its organic law at the adoption of the Federal Constitution. Congress has recognized it over and again, and many of you recollect when free persons of colored race in North Carolina.

The great and good men who founded the government felt it no degradation that the ballot-box was open to free persons of color, nor did General Jackson so regard it when he called them "fellow-citizens" in his Louisiana campaign.—But further, it can easily be shown, by the severest logic, that if you are not to be allowed equality before the law, then the principles laid down in the Declaration of Independence upon which our government is based are words "full of sound and fury signifying nothing."

You are four millions of people, the bone and sinew of the Southern States.—If they are ever to recuperate and regain the important position they once held in the commercial world, it will be due to your energy and industry. But you may well ask how this is to be expected if you are denied the rights of freemen, if you are still to remain a proscribed and degraded race? If you are to have no other motive to in it you than a bare struggle for physical existence—if you are to feel no weight of responsibility—to be moved by no feelings of honor and patriotism—are to entertain no hopes for the elevation and advancement of your children to a higher standpoint than you now occupy, then indeed I do not see with what heart you can go to work at rebuilding the future of these shattered States.

But then you will pay a tax to the support of the government. Your brethren in Louisiana have been paying one for a number of years on property at the assessed value of fifteen millions of dollars. Is the colored man to have no voice in the appropriation of his money? And this too in a government claiming to be republican and founded after a seven years war upon the principle of taxation and representation!

Nothing could be more preposterous, unless it be to refuse men the right of suffrage who have undergone all manner of hardships and dangers for the sake of the government; who have volunteered in the ranks of its armies and risked their lives upon the battle-field to maintain its integrity. There is something more than a juggle of words in the population of "ballot and bullet."

But there is even a more terrible calamity that you may be doomed to bear than the denial of suffrage. I mean the denial of justice in our courts of law. If you are not to be admitted to the witness stand, how are you to prove your contracts? You will be at the mercy of every scoundrel who has a white skin and is disposed to swindle you. Of course you can have no protection for your property. How about your persons? You may be set upon, beaten into a jelly, and murdered outright, and although fifty respectable colored persons might have seen it, you would still be without redress. What is to protect your wives and daughters from the brutal lust of those who would select a time when no white witnesses were present, to effect their devilish designs?—Formerly your masters protected you as persons, now you must protect yourselves as persons, and unfortunately the prejudice is too strong against you (I fear) to expect justice from the State. And there are other feelings by no means so excusable as prejudice and a policy by no means national which will operate to keep you down. Your only hope is an appeal to Congress.

Hold your meetings throughout the State; you have a right to do so. But let everything be done decently and in order. Put down at once the slightest intimation in favor of violence. Let not the evil disposed among you bring discredit upon a good cause. There will be others also, designing men, who will try to provoke you to this for your injury. You have been a much enduring people; continue to be so now. Bearing these things in mind, go on with your meetings. Set the facts before Congress. You have friends there, and your petitions will not be unheard. You may tell them that national tranquility and national justice demands your equality before the law; that if the agitation of this question is ever to cease; if you are to be a contented and happy people; if the root of future internal trouble and confusion in the South is to be removed; if they will introduce a new element of strength into the government, an accession of voters heartily loyal, who will support a national policy and who may be relied on in any emergency in peace or in war, if they will give you the means of defending your freedom which otherwise will be a mockery; if they will guarantee to each State a free publican form of government; if they will carry out the principles of the *inimata* Declaration; if they will make America the field for the development and progress of humanity; if they will do these things or any of them, then implore them not to admit a State until these important guarantees are well secured. At present your rights are protected by a military force, but was to you will be the day when former slave States shall be admitted a full equality in the Union and your equality before the law not recognized.

You may make what use you please of this letter. Yours respectfully,

Wm. W. COLEMAN.

On motion the letter was ordered to be printed as a part of the proceedings of the Convention, and a vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. Coleman in return therefor.

The address of Horace Greeley, of New York, was then received and read as follows:

TO THE COLORED PEOPLE OF NORTH CAROLINA.
MY COUNTRYMEN:—I heard that you are to hold a Convention at Raleigh on the 29th instant, to ask for the Right of Suffrage, and that I am among those invited by you to be present and counsel you. Being under an old and imperative engagement to be on that day in Minnesota, I cannot be with you in North Carolina, and, having no address to which I may send you a letter, I am obliged to respond thus publicly to your invitation. Let me, therefore, urge and entreat you to

I. Be hopeful. Great reforms are seldom completed in a moment. Old wrongs and abuses yield slowly to the advances of Justice and Humanity. I have for thirty years ardently wished, but till very recently, dared not to hope, that I might live to see ours a free country. I now see it, and bless God for the wisdom and beneficence—so infinitely transcending all human preconception—whereby the weakness, infatuation, incapacity, disloyalty, treachery and general unworthiness of men, have been made to subserve the Divine purpose. But for Northern subservency, so enormous that they were justified in expecting to be aided by it in the field as well as in the cabinet, the slaveholders would never have revolted. But for imbecility in high places and incapacity, if not treason also, in the direction of our armies, the rebellion would have been speedily suppressed, without seriously affecting your condition—possibly with new concessions and guarantees to slavery. Looking back at the momentous history, the stupendous transformations of the last five years, we must reverently say, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes." Let us unwaveringly trust that the great work will be prosecuted to its legitimate and logical consummation.

II. Be patient. We may not win a full recognition of your rights directly; but the effort will never be abandoned until its success is assured. And we are no longer resisted by a vast, tenacious, peevish interest—an all but omnipotent "vested right." Slavery the tree, where

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of negro-hate and white prejudice of color are branches, has been cut down.—There is still vitality in the roots; but the branches are bound to wither and decay. Yet this is not the work of a day, and we must learn to labor, and [if need be] to wait.

III. Be peaceful. Do not be seduced nor provoked to resist lawful authority with lawless violence. Better suffer wrong in silence, or be worsted in invoking the protection of the laws. You see what the slaveholders have incurred by resisting authority by force. Let nothing tempt or swerve you from the ways of peace. If you are oppressed and abused, appeal to Congress, which will soon have been clothed by the pending Constitutional Amendment with power to redress your more flagrant wrongs.—Whichever among you resist the law gives a signal advantage to your enemies. Better suffer and trust.

IV. Be diligent. I am exhorting you to steadfast industry. You have had enough of that. Not being fools, you know that you have to work hard for all you get, and probably for something more. There cannot be a hundred of you who do not know that you are to work out your own pecuniary salvation or miserably perish. But you must be equally diligent in educating yourselves and your children, and must not grudge working an extra hour per day, if needed, to provide yourselves with books and teachers. It is indispensable that you all, or nearly all, acquire the rudiments of a substantial education at the earliest moment, and that you each keep on acquiring useful knowledge at every opportunity to the last day of your lives.—Your alleged ignorance is now one of the chief pretexts for denying you the Right of Suffrage.

V. Respect yourselves. Refuse to minister to others' vicious appetites, no matter what is the temptation. Stand up boldly and respectfully about from all Whites who seek to regard you as inferiors merely because of your color. Keep away, or get away from all cities, unless you are engaged in making money, and do not visit them. And, in a rainy season, do not go to negro houses, and show a superiority on one side, though this compels you to go without comforters you might otherwise enjoy. Trade with and patronize your friends, but abjure all such other, encourage your brethren who embark in a sale or any mechanical or other useful industry, though at some personal inconvenience; keep out of debt; work, if possible, for men whom you esteem and trust; and each of you become land-holders so soon as you can without running in debt. Few know how much and there is in an acre, and North Carolinians understand this less than most others. If you each had a cabot and four acres of land, you need never, after next harvest, look for work; while those who want help would come looking for you and offering you fair wages, living wages. Finally

VI. Stay where you belong. It may be and by be well to emigrate, but not now. North Carolina is a noble State, with her resources mainly undeveloped; her climate is salubrious; her soil better than is supposed; her inland navigation, water-power, timber, minerals, &c., &c., sources of unexplored wealth. Work for the best wages offered by good men till you can save the means of employing yourselves; strive to win the respect and esteem of the better Whites and keep clear of the worse; and be sure that, whenever you shall, by your thrift, have made yourselves independent and desirable customers of merchants and others, your righteous demand of enfranchisement can, if not already granted, be no longer successfully resisted. Your friend,
HORACE GREELEY.

New York, Sept. 12th, 1865.

On motion it was adopted and incorporated into the proceedings of the Convention.

The finance committee reported the following resolutions:
Resolved. That, in order to effect a more permanent organization of the convention, and looking to its financial interest, a collection be raised at the close of each meeting to defray the expenses of the convention.

Resolved. That each member of the convention be taxed one dollar for the purpose of paying for printing, &c.

The report was received and adopted. Five o'clock having arrived the convention adjourned.

EVENING SESSION.

The convention met at early candle light and were entertained for several hours by speeches from Messrs. Rue and Sampson.

Mr. Rue's effort was well received, as it deserved to be. His remarks were spiced with humor, and while he earnestly de-manded justice for the colored man, he advised moderation and proved, conclusively

[Continued on Second page.]